

“ALL THE DAY LONG”
NO. 2150

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 22, 1890,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Let not your heart envy sinners: but be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.
For surely there is an end, and your expectation shall not be cut off.”*
Proverbs 23:17, 18.

LAST Lord’s-Day we had for our texts two promises [*Everlasting Love Revealed*, #2149.] I trust they were full of comfort to the tried people of God and to souls in the anguish of conviction. Today we will consider two precepts so that we may not seem to neglect any part of the Word of God, for the precept is as divine as the promise. Here we have a command given of the Holy Spirit through the wisest of men and therefore both on the divine and on the human side it is most weighty. I said that Solomon was the wisest of men, and yet he became, in practice, the most foolish. By his folly he gained a fresh store of experience of the saddest sort, and we trust that he turned to God with a penitent heart, and so became wiser than ever; wiser with a second wisdom which the grace of God had given him, to consecrate his earthly wisdom. He who had been a voluptuous prince became the wise preacher in Israel; let us give our hearts to know the wisdom which he taught.

The words of Solomon to his own son are not only wise, but full of tender anxiety. They are worthy, therefore, to be set in the highest degree as to value and to be received with heartiness as the language of fatherly affection.

These verses are found in the Book of Proverbs; let them pass current as proverbs in the church of God as they did in Israel of old. Let them be “familiar in our mouths as household words.” Let them be often quoted, frequently weighed and then carried into daily practice. God grant that this particular text may become proverbial in this church from this day forward. May the Holy Spirit impress it on every memory and heart! May it be embodied in all our lives!

If you will look steadily at the text you will see, first, *the prescribed course of the godly man*: “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Secondly, you will note *the probable interruption* of that course. It occurred in those past ages and it still occurs: “Let not your heart envy sinners.” We are often tempted to repine because the wicked prosper. When we do, the fear of the Lord within us is disturbed and envious thoughts arise; which will lead on to murmuring and to distrust of our heavenly Father unless they are speedily checked. So foolish and ignorant are we that we lose our walk with God by fretting because of evildoers. Thirdly, we shall notice, before we close, *the helpful consideration* which may enable us to hold on our way and to cease from fretting about the proud prosperity of the ungodly: “For surely there is an end, and your expectation shall not be cut off.”

I. Oh, for divine grace to practice what the Spirit of God says with regard to our first point, THE PRESCRIBED COURSE OF THE BELIEVER—“Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long!” The fear of the Lord is a brief description for true religion. It is an inward condition causing hearty submission to our heavenly Father. It consists very much in a holy reverence of God and a sacred awe of Him. This is accompanied by a child-like trust in Him which leads to loving obedience, tender submission, and lowly adoration. It is a *filial* fear. Not the fear which has tormented, but that which accompanies joy when we “rejoice with trembling.”

We must, first of all, be in the fear of God before we can remain in it “all the day long.” This can never be our condition except as the fruit of the new birth. To be in the fear of the Lord, “you must be born-again.” The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, as we are taught by the Holy Spirit who is the sole author of all grace. Where this fear exists, it is the token of eternal life and it proves the abiding

indwelling of the Holy Spirit. “Happy is the man that fears always.” “The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him.” This holy fear of the living God is the life of God showing itself in the quickened ones.

This fear, according to the text, is for all the day and for every day; the longest day is not to be too long for our reverence, nor for our obedience. If our days are lengthened until the day of life declines into the evening of old age, still are we to be in the fear of God; yes, as the day grows longer, our holy fear must be deeper.

This is contrary to the habit of those persons who have *a religion of show*. They are very fine, very holy, very devout, when anybody looks at them; but this is the love of human approbation, not the fear of the Lord. The Pharisee, with a half-penny in one hand, and a trumpet in the other, is a picture of the man who gives alms only that his praises may be sounded forth. The Pharisee, standing at the corner of the street, saying his prayers, is a picture of the man who never prays in secret, but is very glib in pious assemblies. “Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.” Show religion is a vain show! Do nothing to be seen of men or you will ripen into a mere hypocrite.

Neither may we regard godliness as something off the common—an extraordinary thing. Have not *a religion of spasms*. We have heard of men and women who have been singularly excellent on one occasion, but never again—they blazed out like comets, the wonders of a season—and they disappeared like comets, never to be seen again. Religion produced at high pressure for a supreme occasion is not a healthy growth. We need an ordinary, common, everyday godliness, which may be compared to the light of the fixed stars which shines forevermore. Religion must not be thought of as something apart from daily life—it should be the most vital part of our existence. Our praying should be like our breathing, natural and constant. Our communion with God should be like our taking of food, a happy and natural privilege. Brethren, it is a great pity when people draw a hard and fast line across their life, dividing it into the sacred and the secular. Say not, “This is religion and the other is business,” but sanctify *all* things. Our most common acts should be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer and thus made into sacred deeds. The best of men have the least change of tone in their lives. When the great Elijah knew that he was to be taken up, what did he do? If you knew that tonight you would be carried away to heaven, you would probably think of something special with which to quit this earthly scene. But the most fitting thing to do would be to continue in your duty, as you would have done if nothing had been revealed to you. It was Elijah’s business to go to the schools of the prophets and instruct the young students—and he went about that business until he took his seat in the chariot of fire. He said to Elisha, “The Lord has sent me to Bethel.” When he had exhorted the Bethel students he thought of the other college, and said to his attendant, “The Lord has sent me to Jericho.” He took his journey with as much composure as if he had a lifetime before him, and thus fulfilled his tutorship till the Lord sent him to Jordan, from where he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. What is there better for a man of God than to abide in his calling in which he glorifies God? That which God has given you to do you should do. That and nothing else, come what may! If any of you should, tomorrow, have a revelation that you must die; it would not be wise to go upstairs and sit down and read, or pray until the usual day’s work was finished. Go on, good woman, and send the children to school and cook the dinner. Go about the proper business of the day, and then if you are to die you will have left no ends of life’s web to ravel out. So live that your death shall not be a piece of strange metal soldered on to your life, but part and parcel of all that has gone before. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Living or dying we are the Lord’s and let us live as such.

Ours must never be *a religion that is periodic in its flow* like certain, intermittent springs which flow and ebb, and flow only to ebb again. Beware of the spirit which is in a rapture one hour, and in a rage the next. Beware of serving Christ on Sunday and Mammon on Monday. Beware of the godliness which varies with the calendar. Every Sunday morning some folks take out their godliness and touch it up while they are turning the brush round their best hat. Many women, after a fashion, put on the fear of God with their new bonnet. When Sunday is over and their best things are put away, they have also put away their best thoughts and their best behavior. We must have a seven-days’ religion, or else we have none at all! Periodical godliness is perpetual hypocrisy! He that towards Jesus can be enemy *and* friend by turns, is in truth *always* an enemy. We need a religion which, like the poor, we always have with us,

which, like our heart, is always throbbing and, like our breath, is always moving. Some people have strange notions on this point—they are holy only on holy days and in holy places. There was a man who was always pious on Good Friday. He showed no token of religion on any other Friday or, indeed, on any other day; but on Good Friday nothing would stop him from going to church in the morning after he had eaten a hotcross bun for breakfast. That day he took the Sacrament and felt much better; surely he might well enough do so since on his theory he had taken in grace enough to last him for another year! You and I believe such ideas to be ignorant and superstitious, but we must take heed that we do not err after a similar manner. Every Friday must be a Good Friday to us. May we become so truly gracious that to us every day becomes a holy day! May our garments be vestments; may our meals be sacraments; may our houses be temples; may our families be churches; may our lives be sacrifices and ourselves kings and priests unto God! May the bells upon our horses be “holiness unto the Lord”! God send us religion of this kind, for this will involve our being “in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

Let us practically note the details which are comprised in the exhortation, “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” The sun is up and we awake. May we each one feel, “When I awake I am still with You.” It is wise to rise in proper time, for drowsiness may waste an hour and cause us to be behind all day, so that we cannot get into order and act as those who quietly walk with God. If I am bound to be in the fear of God all the day long, I am bound to begin well, with earnest prayer and sweet communion with God. On rising it is as essential to prepare the heart as to wash the face; as necessary to put on Christ as to put on one’s garments. Our first word should be with our heavenly Father. It is good for the soul’s health to begin the day by taking a satisfying draught from the river of the water of life. Very much more depends upon beginnings than some men think. How you go to bed tonight may be determined by your getting up this morning. If you get out of bed on the wrong side, you may keep on the wrong side all day. If your heart is right when you wake, it will be a help towards its being right till you go to sleep in the evening. Go not forth into a dry world till the morning dew lies on your branch. Baptize your heart in devotion before you wade into the stream of daily care. See not the face of man until you have first seen the face of God. Let your first thoughts fly heavenward, and let your first breathings be prayer.

And now we are downstairs and are off to business, or to labor. As you hurry along the street, think of these words, “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Leave not your God at home; you need Him most abroad. In mingling with your fellow men, be *with* them, but be not *of* them if that would involve your forgetting your Lord. That early interview which you have had with your Beloved should perfume your conversation all day long. A smile from Jesus in the morning will be sunshine all the day. Endeavor, when you are plying the trowel, or driving the plane, or guiding the plow, or using the needle or the pen, to keep up constant communication with your Father and your Lord. Let the telephone between you and the Eternal never cease from its use; put your ear to it and hear what the Lord shall speak to you—and put your mouth to it and ask counsel from the oracle above. Whether you work long hours, or short hours, “Be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

But it is time for meals. Be in the fear of the Lord at your table. The soul may be poisoned while the body is being nourished if we turn the hour of refreshment into an hour of indulgence. Some have been gluttonous—more have been drunk. Do not think of your table as though it were a hog’s trough where the animal might gorge to the full, but watch your appetite and by holy thanksgiving make your table to be the Lord’s Table. Eat the bread of earth as to eat bread at last in the kingdom of God! Drink that your head and heart may be in the best condition to serve God. When God feeds you, do not profane the occasion by excess, or defile it by loose conversation.

During the day our business calls us into company. Our associations in labor may not be as choice as we could wish, but he that earns his bread is often thrown where his own will would not lead him. If we were never to deal with ungodly men it would be necessary for us to go out of the world. He that is in the fear of God all the day long will watch his own spirit, language and actions; that these may be such as become the gospel of Christ in whatever society his lot may be cast. Seek not to be a hermit or a monk; be a man of God among men! When making a bargain, or selling your goods to customers, be in the fear of God. It may be necessary to go into the market, or on the exchange; but be in the fear of the

Lord amid the throng. It may be you will seldom be able to speak of that which is most dear to you, lest you cast pearls before swine; but you must abide always under holy and heavenly influence so as to be always ready to give a reason for the hope which is in you with meekness and fear. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long,” though your ears may be vexed, and your heart grieved with the evil around you. He that cannot be in the fear of God in London cannot in the country.

The company has now gone and you are alone; maintain the fear of the Lord in your solitude. Beware of falling into solitary sin. Certain young men and women, when alone, pull out a wicked novel which they would not like to be seen reading. Others will have their sly nips though they would be reputed very temperate. If a man is right with God he is in his best company when alone and he seeks therein to honor his God and not to grieve Him. Surely, when I am alone with God, I am bound to use my best manners. Do nothing which you would be afraid to have known. Be in the fear of the Lord when you are so much alone that you have no fear of men.

The evening draws in, the shop is closed and you have a little time to yourself. Our young people in shops need a rest and a walk. Is this your case? “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” In the evening, as well as in the morning, be true to your Lord. Beware of ill company in the evening! Take care that you never say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me.” “Be you in the fear of the Lord” when sinners entice you, and refuse any offer which is not pleasing to God.

“Recreation,” says one. Yes, recreation. There are many helpful and healthy recreations which can, in moderation, be used to advantage. But engage in no pastime which would hinder your continuing in the fear of the Lord! In your recreation forget not your higher recreation in which you were created anew in Christ Jesus! Our chief rest lies in a change of service for our Lord; our fullest pleasure in fellowship with Jesus.

Night has fallen around us and we are home with our families—let us not forget to close the day with family prayer and private prayer as we opened it. Our chamber must see nothing which angels might blush to look upon. Those holy beings come and go where holy ones repose. Angels have a special liking for sleeping saints. Did they not put a ladder from heaven down to the place where Jacob lay? Though he had only a stone for his pillow, the earth for his bed, the hedges for his curtains and the skies for his canopy, yet God was there and angels flocked about him. Between God’s throne and the beds of holy men there has long been a much frequented road. Sleep in Jesus every night so that you may sleep in Jesus at the last. From dawn to midnight “be you in the fear of the Lord.”

Let us now remember special occasions. All days are not quite the same. Exceptional events will happen, and these are all included in the day. You sustain, perhaps one day, a great loss and unexpectedly find yourself far poorer than when you left your bed. “Be you in the fear of the Lord” when under losses and adversities. When the great floods prevail and storms of trials sweep over you, remain in the ark of the fear of the Lord and you shall be as safe as Noah was.

Possibly you may have a wonderful day of success; but be not always grasping for it. Yet your ship may come home; your windfall may drop at your feet. Beyond anything you have expected, a surprising gain may fall into your lap; be not unduly excited, but remain in the fear of the Lord. Take heed that you be not lifted up with pride, so as to dote upon your wealth, for then your God may find it necessary to afflict you out of love to your soul.

It may happen, during the day that you are assailed by an unusual temptation. Christian men are well armed against common temptations, but sudden assaults may injure them. Therefore, “be in the fear of the Lord all the day long” and then surprises will not overthrow you. You shall not be afraid of evil tidings, neither shall you be betrayed by evil suggestions if you are rooted and grounded in the constant fear of the Lord.

During the day, perhaps, you are maliciously provoked. An evil person assails you with envenomed speech and if you lose your temper a little your adversary takes advantage of your weakness and becomes more bitter and slanderous. He hurls at you things which ought not to be thought of, much less to be said. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” “Cease from anger and forsake wrath.” “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” The adversary knows your tender place and therefore he says the most atrocious things against God and holy things. Heed him not, but in patience

possess your soul and in the fear of the Lord you will find an armor which his poisoned arrows cannot pierce. “May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

It may be, that during the day you will have to act in a very difficult business. Common transactions between man and man are easy enough to honest minds—but every now and then a nice point is raised—a point of conscience, a matter not to be decided off-hand. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Spread the hard case before the Lord. Judge a matter as it will be judged before His bar and if this is too much for your judgment, and then wait upon God for further light. No man goes astray, even in a difficult case, if he is accustomed to cry, like David, “Bring here the ephod.” This holy Book and the divine Spirit will guide us aright when our best judgment wavers. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

But, alas, you are feeling very unwell; this day will differ from those of activity. You cannot go to business. You have to keep to your bed. Fret not, but “be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” If the day has to last through the night because sleep forsakes you, be still with your thoughts soaring toward heaven, your desires quiet in your Father’s bosom and your mind happy in the sympathy of Christ! To have our whole being bathed and baptized in the Holy Spirit is to find health in sickness and joy in pain.

It may be, also, that you suffer from a mental sickness in the form of depression of spirit. Things look very dark and your heart is very heavy. Mourner, “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” When life is like a foggy day; when providence is cloudy and stormy and you are caught in a hurricane; still “be in the fear of the Lord.” When your soul is exceedingly sorrowful and you are bruised as a cluster trod in the winepress, yet cling close to God and never let go your reverent fear of Him. However exceptional and unusual may be your trial, yet know within your soul, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

I have sketched the matter roughly. *Let me now suggest to you excellent reasons* for being always in the fear of the Lord. Ought we not to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, since He sees us all the day long? Does the Lord ever take His eyes from off us? Does the keeper of Israel ever slumber? If God were not our God, but only our lawful master, I should say, “Let us not be eye-servants”; but since we cannot escape His all-seeing eyes, let us be the more careful how we behave ourselves. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long” for Jehovah, whom you fear, sees you without ceasing.

Remember, also, that sin is equally evil all the day long. Is there an hour when it would be right to disobey God? Is there some interval in which the law of holiness has no force? I think not. Therefore, never consent to sin! To fear God is always right; to put away the fear of God from before our eyes would be always criminal; therefore, be ever in the fear of God. Remember the strictness of Nehemiah’s integrity, and how he said, “So did not I because of the fear of the Lord.”

Walk in the fear of the Lord at all times because you always belong to Christ. The blood-mark is always upon you—will you ever belie it? You have been chosen and you are always chosen; you have been bought with a price and you are always your Lord’s. You have been called out from the world by the Holy Spirit and He is always calling you. You have been preserved by sovereign grace and you are always so preserved—therefore, by the privileges you enjoy, you are bound to abide in the fear of the Lord. How could you lay down your God-given and heaven-honored character of a child of God? No, rather cling forever to your adoption and the heritage it secures you.

You can never tell when Satan will attack you, therefore be always in the fear of the Lord. You are in an enemy’s country. Soldiers, be always on the watch! Soldiers, keep in order of fight! You might straggle from the ranks and begin to lie about in the hedges and sleep without sentries if you were in your own country. But you are marching through the enemy’s land where an enemy lurks behind every bush. The fear of the Lord is your sword and shield; never lay it down!

Furthermore, remember that your Lord may come at any hour. Before the word can travel from my lips to your ears Jesus may be here. While you are in business, or on your bed, or in the field, the flaming heavens may proclaim His advent. Stand, therefore, with your loins girt and your lamps trimmed, ready to go into the supper whenever the Bridegroom comes. Or you may die. As a church we have had a double warning, during the last few days, in the departure of our two beloved elders, Messrs.

Hellier and Croker. They have been carried home like shocks of corn, fully ripe. They have departed in peace and have joyfully entered into rest. We, also, are on the margin of the dividing stream; our feet are dipped in the waters which wash the river's brim. We, too, shall soon ford the black torrent. In a moment, suddenly, we may be called away; let every action be such that we would not object to have it quoted as our last action. Let every day be so spent that it might fitly be the close of life on earth. Let our near and approaching end help to keep us “in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

If we keep in that state, *observe the admirable results!* To abide in the fear of the Lord is to dwell safely. To forsake the Lord would be to court danger. In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, but apart from it there is no security. How honorable is such a state! Men ridicule the religion which is not uniform. I heard of a brother who claimed to have long been a teetotaler, but some doubted. When he was asked how long he had been an abstainer, he replied, “Off and on for 20 years.” You should have seen the significant smile upon all faces. An abstainer off and on! His example did not stand for much! Certain professors are Christians “off and on” and nobody respects them. Such seed as this will not grow; there is no vitality in it. Constancy is the proof of sincerity. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long”; for this is to be happy! God has spoiled the believer for being easy in sin. If you are a Christian you will never find happiness in departing from God. I say again, God has spoiled you for such pleasure! Your joy lies in a closer walk with God! Your heaven on earth is in communion with the Lord!

If you abide in the fear of the Lord, how useful you will be! Your “off and on” people are worth nothing—nobody is influenced by them. What little good they do, they undo. The abiding man is also the growing man. He that is “in the fear of the Lord all the day long” gets to have more of that fear and it has more practical power over his life and heart. What a poor life they lead who are alternately zealous and lukewarm! Like Penelope, they weave by day, but unravel by night. They blow hot and cold and so melt and freeze by turns. They build and then break down and so are never at rest. Children of God, let your conduct be consistent! Let not your lives be like a checkerboard, with as many blacks as whites. Do not be speckled birds, like magpies, more famed for chatter than anything else. Oh, that God would make us white doves! I pray you be not bold one day, and cowardly another! Be not one day sound in the faith, and the next day on the downgrade. Be not under excitement generous, and in cool blood mean as a miser. Oh, that we might become like our Father in heaven in holiness, and then become like He in immutability, so as to be forever holy!

From all this *let us infer our great need*. I think I hear somebody say, “You are cutting out a nice bit of work for us.” Am I? Believe me, I am looking to a stronger hand than yours. To be in the fear of the Lord for a single day is not to be accomplished by unrenewed nature—it is a work of divine grace. See, then, what great grace you will need for all the days of your life! Go for it and get it! See how little *you* can do without the Spirit of God—without His indwelling you will soon cast off all fear of the Lord. Plead the covenant promise, “I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.” Depend upon God for everything and as you know that salvation is of faith that it might be by grace, exercise much faith towards God! Believe that He can make you to be in His fear all the day long. “According to your faith, be it unto you.” Believe holiness to be possible! Seek after it and possess it. Faith, as it is the channel of divine grace, must always be associated with the truths of God. True faith lives on the truth of God. If you give up the doctrines of the gospel, you will not be in the fear of God at all. And if you begin to doubt them, you will not be “in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” Get solid truth for the foundation of your faith and let your firm faith bring you daily grace that you may manifestly be always in the fear of the Lord.

II. Now I have rightly taken up most of my time with the principal topic, and we will only have a word or two upon the next theme. Let us consider THE PROBABLE INTERRUPTION. It has happened to godly men in all ages to see *the wicked prosper* and they have been staggered by the sight. You see a man who has no conscience making money in your trade while you make none. Sometimes you think that your conscientiousness hinders you; and I hope it is nothing else. You see another person scheming and cheating; to him honesty is mere policy and Sunday labor is no difficulty, for the Word of God is nothing to him. You cannot do as he does and therefore you do not seem to get on as he does. Be it so; but let not his prosperity grieve you. There is something better to live for than mere money-making. If

your life pleases God, let it please *you*. Never envy the ungodly. Suppose God allows them to succeed—what then? You should no more envy them than you envy fat bullocks the ribbons which adorn them at the show. They are ready for the slaughter! Do you wish yourself in their place? The fate of the prosperous sinner is one to be dreaded—he is set on high to be cast down.

Do not, even in your wildest dream, envy the ungodly of their transient happiness! Their present prosperity is the only heaven they will ever know. Let them have as much of it as they can. I have heard of a wife who treated her unkind and ungodly husband with great gentleness for this very reason. She said, “I have prayed for him and entreated him to think about his soul. But at last I have come to fear that he will die in his sins and therefore I have made up my mind that I will make him as happy as I can in this life. I tremble to think of what his misery will be in the world to come and therefore I will make him happy now.” O men in your senses, surely you will not grudge poor swine their husks and swill! No, fill the trough and let the creature feed, for it has neither part nor lot in a higher life. Believer, take your bitter cup and drink it without complaining, for an hour with your God will be a hundredfold recompense for a life of trial.

One is the more tried because *these men are very apt to boast*. They crow over the suffering believer, saying, “What comes of your religion? You are worse off than I am! See how splendidly I get on without God!” Care nothing for their boasting; it will end soon. Their tongue walks through the earth, but it only utters vanity.

It is galling to *see the enemies of God triumphant*. Their policy for a time beats the plain protest of the lover of the truth of God. Their deceit baffles the plain man. The lovers of error outnumber the men of God! Such men tread on creeds and trust-deeds and every other legal protection of honest people. What do they care? They despise the old-fashioned folk whom they oppress. Remember Haman, in the Book of Esther, and note how glorious he was till he was hung on the gallows!

There is no real cause for envying the wicked, for their present is danger and their future is doom. I see them now on yonder island, sporting, dancing, and merrily feasting. I am standing as on a bare rock, and I might well envy them their island of roses and lilies. But as I watch I see that their fairy island is gradually sinking to destruction. The ocean is rising all around—the waves are carrying away the shores; even while they dance the floods advance! Lo, yonder is one infatuated wretch sinking amidst the devouring flood! The rest continue at their play but it cannot last much longer. They will all soon be gone. Let me stand on my lone rock rather than sink amid their fleeting luxury. Let me abide in safety rather than dance where danger is all around.

Yes, dear friends, if you envy the wicked *it will do you serious harm*. Envy helps in no way, but it hinders in many ways. If you envy the wicked you may soon wish to be like they are. If you do so wish, you are like they are now! He that would be willing to be wicked in order to prosper is wicked already! He who says, “I should like to do as they do, that I might grow rich as they do,” why, he is a man that has his price and would sell his soul if he could find a buyer! No, not for the entire world would we share the lot of unbelievers! We would sit in the gate with Mordecai sooner than feast with the king with Haman. God help us, dear friends, that we may not be disturbed by seeing the prosperity of the wicked.

III. We close with THE HELPFUL CONSIDERATION. The text says, “For surely there is an end, and your expectation shall not be cut off.”

First, then, *there is an end of this life*. These things are not forever; on the contrary, all that we see is a dissolving view. Surely, every man walks in a vain show, even as a show it is vain. You talk of spiritual things as though they were shadows, but in very truth these are the only substance! Temporal things are as the mirage of the desert. The things about us are such stuff as dreams are made of and when we truly awake we shall despise their image. In all wealth and honor there is a worm and a moth. Think of the sinner’s end and you will no longer be troubled when he spreads himself like a green bay tree.

Next, *there is an end of the worldling’s prosperity*. He makes his money. What then? He makes more. What then? He makes more. What then? He dies and there is a little notice in the newspaper which says that he died worth so much, which, being interpreted, means that he was taken away from so much which he never possessed but guarded for his heir. There is an end in death, and after death the judgment; “for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.” What an end will

that be! The sinner may live as carelessly as he pleases, but he must answer for it at the judgment seat of Christ! Loud may his laughter be! Sarcastic and bitter may his criticisms be upon religion! But there is an end and when the death-sweat beads his brow, he will lower his key and need help from that very gospel which he criticized. “There is an end.” Let us not spend our lives for that which has an end—an immortal soul should seek immortal joys.

Dear friends, to you there is an end in quite another sense. *God has an end in your present trouble and exercise.* Your difficulties and trials are sent as messenger from God with gracious design. “Be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long,” for every part of the day has its tendency to work out your *spiritual* education; your preparation for the heaven to come! In everything that happens to you your heavenly Father has an end. The arrows of calamity are aimed at your sins. Your bitter cups are moans to purify the inward parts of the soul. Fret not, but trust. There is an old proverb that you should never let children and fools see half-finished work. Even so, the work of God in providence cannot be judged of by such poor children as we are, for we cannot see the end of the Lord’s design. My brothers and sisters, when we see the end from the beginning and behold God’s work complete, we shall have a very different view of things from what we have now, while the work is still proceeding!

Lastly, while there is an end to the wicked, *there will be no failure to your expectation.* What are you expecting? That God will keep His promise? And so He will. That God will give you peace in the end? And so He will. That He will raise you from the dead and set you in heavenly places with Christ? And so He will. And that you shall be forever with the Lord and He will grant you glory and bliss? And so He will. “Your expectation shall not be cut off.” Every Christian is a man of great expectations and none of them will fail. Let him cultivate his hope and enlarge its scope, for the hopes which are built on Jesus and His divine grace will never disappoint us! In our case the birds in the bush are better birds than those in the hand and they are quite as sure. The promise of God is in itself a possession and our expectation of it is in itself an enjoyment.

I have done, dear friends. May the Holy Spirit speak these things home to your hearts! Christian people ought to be exceedingly glad, for if they have but a small estate, they have it on an endless tenure! The worldling may have a large house, but he has it only upon a short lease—he will soon have nothing. Just now there is a great noise made about leaseholds falling in. Every ungodly man may have his lease on life run out tomorrow! But the believer has a freehold. What he has is his without reserve. “Their inheritance shall be forever.” By faith grasp the eternal! Treasure the spiritual! Rejoice in God and “be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” God grant you this in His great grace, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 37.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—917, 37, 703.

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